



# NewsFlash

May 2010 ★ [www.roundrocktexas.gov](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov)

## Tiered water rates are in effect

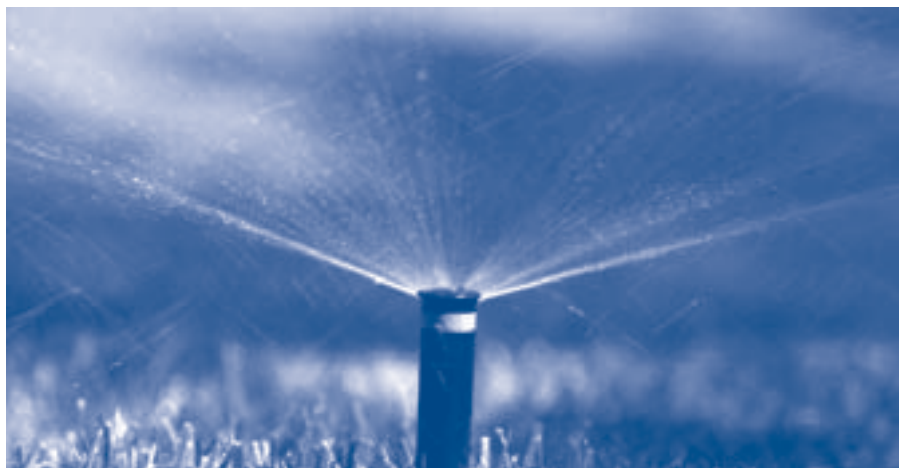
Beginning with your May water bill, the two-tier block rates designed to encourage water conservation go into effect. The block rate program will be in place through the end of October.

The program works like this: Every residential customer with the typical 5/8-inch water meter pays a \$13.84 monthly base fee. For each 1,000 gallons of water used up to 18,000 gallons, the rate is \$2.25. For each 1,000 gallons of water used over 18,000, the rate is \$2.94.

Residents who use less than 18,000 gallons a month during the summer – which is about 80 percent of our customers – won't see any changes in their bills. Those using more than 18,000 gallons a month comprise about 20 percent of our residential customers, but that 20 percent consume approximately 50 percent of all water used by residential customers.

To estimate your bill under the program, the City has created a water rate conservation calculator. Go to [roundrocktexas.gov/mybill](http://roundrocktexas.gov/mybill) and enter the amount of water you use. The calculator will show you how much you'll pay for your water use.

The block rate program is designed to encourage conservation by charging a higher rate to higher usage customers. By watering wisely and installing drought-tolerant landscaping, higher rate users can reduce their consumption and pay the lower rate.



## It's time to start watering wisely

The City's Drought Contingency Plan goes into effect on May 1, as it does every year. What that means for you is, it's time to water wisely.

The first step in watering wisely is to follow the voluntary watering schedule. The twice per week schedule is the same as last summer: If your street address ends in an odd number, your watering days are Wednesday and Saturday. If your address ends in an even number, then Thursday and Sunday are your watering days. All non-single family residential properties have Tuesday and Friday as their water days. The City asks that no one waters on Mondays, to allow the water treatment plant to recharge after the weekend.

But how often should you water? Now, while temperatures are still mild and we've had regular rainfall, it's ideal to only hand-water plants showing stress (such as drooping leaves in the morning). Potted plants and gardens typically require more frequent irrigation, usually once every three days. Once temperatures increase, use common sense.

Irrigate turfgrass twice per week, if needed, according to the watering schedule during summer months. You can water less frequently if your yard has good, deep soil, is shaded, and/or you do not water on a set schedule currently and your landscape is composed of native or adaptive plants. The landscape can (and should) tolerate some stress, which will help build up its drought tolerance and

encourage deep root growth. An easy way to see if your turf needs water is to walk across it. If you can still see your footprints after 15 seconds then it needs water.

When is the best time to water? Water before the sun has risen or after it has set. Evaporation losses are up to 60 percent higher during the heat of the day. The most ideal time is early morning, because if there is "extra" water on the plant, it will evaporate once the sun comes up. Foliage left wet for more than 8 hours is susceptible to disease. Avoid watering on windy days, as most of the water will be blown off your property. Wind speeds tend to be lower when the sun is down – another good reason to water at night.

Now is also a great time re-apply mulch around trees, shrubs, gardens and even potted plants. A layer of mulch at least 2 inches deep is ideal for holding in water from rain, reducing water loss from evaporation and preventing weed growth. City of Round Rock water customers can pickup mulch for free from the Brush Recycling Center, 310 Deepwood Drive. Bring a copy of your water bill and a shovel with you to pick up mulch.

To schedule a free evaluation of your irrigation system, or if you have questions regarding water wise landscaping or water use, contact Jessica Woods, the City's Water Conservation Specialist, at [jwoods@round-rock.tx.us](mailto:jwoods@round-rock.tx.us) or 671-2872.

# EPA mandates, fiscal responsibility drive storm water utility consideration

The City of Round Rock is facing ever increasing demands to effectively manage storm water runoff due to land development and increased federal and state regulations. Our extensive drainage system requires consistent, dedicated funding to ensure regulatory compliance, environmental preservation and – most importantly – protection of life and property from flood damage.

It is the City's responsibility to manage our storm water drainage system. We are required by the Federal Emergency Management Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to ensure certain development, maintenance and water quality standards are met.

Currently, we pay for the storm water system from general revenues such as sales taxes and property taxes. Because of declining sales tax revenues and increasing demands for other services funded by general revenues, such as police and fire protection, we believe the time has come to change how we fund the storm water system. Also, many of the requirements noted above are new, unfunded mandates from the federal government that we anticipate will only become greater over time.

A Storm Water Drainage Utility – where residents and businesses pay a monthly fee to fund the system – is a recognized best practice throughout the country and used by more than 60 Texas cities. Fees would be based on a property's impact to the system, which would more appropriately and fairly allocate the costs for storm water services while providing vital funding stability. As the demand and subsequent costs of providing this non-optional service continue to rise, it is more important than ever to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of those costs.

A Storm Water Drainage Utility meets the Community's financial objectives in two important ways. First, it aligns with our citizen's preference for user fee based program funding, where service costs are paid for by those who use and benefit the most. Second, it aligns with the City's adopted financial policy which has a primary objective to reduce general fund reliance on volatile sales tax revenue to fund basic services.

As always, we will continue to make every effort to find cost controllers and revenue generators as we work to provide services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

## In Brief

### **Movies in the Park serves up *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs***

The Parks and Recreation Department and Time Warner Cable present *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* for Movies in the Park at 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 4, at Old Settlers Park.

Admission to Movies in the Park is free, courtesy of Time Warner Cable. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket and enjoy the movie. You can bring your own snacks, but concessions will be available for guests.

Activities start at 7:30 p.m. and the movie starts at dark.

### **Catch the Reading Express @ your library this summer**

The Round Rock Public Library's Summer Reading Program is not only a great way for kids to keep up their reading skills, but to reinforce the importance of reading and literacy for the whole family.

The theme for the 2010 children's program is "Catch the Reading Express." The teen program for 2010 is "Within Arms Reach: The Future is Yours! TTR.10." The children's and teen programs will run from June 9 through Aug. 9.

In this program, readers of all ages are encouraged to log the time they spend reading for prizes and rewards. Whether its books, magazines, newspapers or even books on tape, you can count your time spent reading and earn incentives for different levels. Even children who can't yet read can participate when someone reads to them.

Go to [roundrocktexas.gov/library](http://roundrocktexas.gov/library) to learn more.

### **Juneteenth celebration June 18-19**

Come and experience the 2nd Annual Juneteenth Rhythm & Ribs Celebration brought to you by the City of Round Rock and "The Voice." The celebration takes place at the Baca Center, 301 W. Bagdad Ave., from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday, June 18, and 2 to 9 p.m. Saturday, June 19. Come and enjoy live music, a barbecue cook-off, kids play areas, basketball tournament and more. For event or vendor information, please call "The Voice" office at 238-8271 or email [info@thevoice.com](mailto:info@thevoice.com).



## Jump into summer fun at City pools

The Rock'N River Family Aquatic Center opens May 22 and the Micki Krebsbach Pool will open for summer fun on May 29!

Rock'N River is a 40,481 sq ft park, complete with a lazy river, crazy slides and a water playground, and is located within Old Settlers Park, 3300 Palm Valley Blvd. The Micki Krebsbach Pool, 301 Deepwood Drive, features water slides, kids play area and floating water characters.

### **The Rock'N River Family Aquatic Center**

#### **Swim Schedule:**

May 22, 23 (Opening weekend)  
12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

May 29 – August 22

Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday  
10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Friday/Sunday  
1 p.m. – 8 p.m.

August 23, 28, 29, Sept 4, 5, 6  
12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Closed Wednesdays

#### **Admission Fees:**

\$4.50 adults age 18 – 54

\$3.50 children 17 & under, seniors 55+

\$1 additional fee for non-residents

### **Micki Krebsbach Pool**

#### **Swim Schedule:**

Open daily from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
beginning May 29 (closed Tuesdays)

#### **Admission Fees:**

\$2.50 adults age 18 – 54

\$1.50 children 17 & under, seniors 55+

\$1 additional fee for non-residents

You can also check out our summer programs and register for Swim Lessons and Summer Camps at [roundrockrecreation.com](http://roundrockrecreation.com). You may also visit [roundrocktexas.gov](http://roundrocktexas.gov) for the latest pool schedules and summer activities.